



# Unintentional Poisoning Injury Factsheet

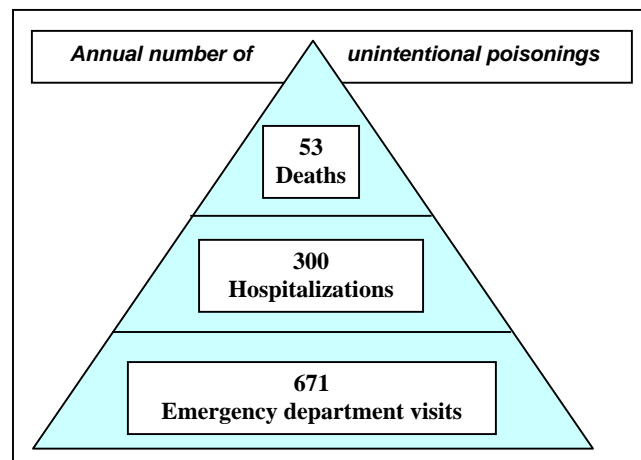
Injury Prevention & Control Program

August, 2005

## Overview

Hawaii had the 37<sup>th</sup> highest unintentional poisoning fatality rate in the United States, a rate that was 43% lower than that for the rest of the country.

Unintentional poisonings were the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause of injury mortality in Hawaii, and the 7<sup>th</sup> leading cause of non-fatal injury-related hospitalizations. For every Hawaii resident killed by a poisoning, there are 6 who are hospitalized, and another 13 who are treated in emergency departments (ED) for non-fatal poisonings each year.



*This factsheet describes injuries to Hawaii residents only, unless otherwise noted. Mortality data is mostly compiled from years 2000-2004. Hospitalization (2003) and ED data (2002) includes only non-fatal injuries.*

## Mortality trends (2000-2004)

- Significantly increasing trend (31 to 67 poisoning deaths per year). This increase did not appear to be due to differential classification with suicidal poisonings or poisonings of undetermined intent.

## Groups at risk

- Most (74%) of the fatally injured victims were 35 to 55 years of age, and most (81%) were males.
- In contrast to fatal poisonings, rates of non-fatal poisonings were by far the highest among children less than 5 years of age. This was mostly due to ED visits for infants and 1 year-olds.

## Environment/geography

- Hawaii County residents were the most likely to call the Hawaii Poison Center (109 calls/10,000 residents).

## Contributing factors

- Drugs and medicinal substances caused almost all (93%) of the fatal poisonings. Narcotics and hallucinogens were most commonly noted (35%), including heroin, cocaine and morphine.
- Most (64%) of the non-fatal poisonings were due to drugs and medicinal substances. Poisonings from psychotropic agents were the most common (18%), particularly those from benzodiazepine-based tranquilizers (7%).
- Hawaii high school students had greater access to illegal drugs at school (1995-2001 average prevalence: 37%), compared to all U.S. high school students (31%). There was no trend in the proportion of Hawaii students with access to illegal drugs, which decreased among all U.S. students. (Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System data.)